

## Statement of Subcommittee Chairman Scott Perry (R-PA) Oversight and Management Efficiency Subcommittee

"Watchdog Recommendations: A Better Way Ahead to Manage the Department of Homeland Security"
February 16, 2017

## Remarks as Prepared

For the past 8 years, we watched the Obama Administration turn a blind eye to bureaucratic waste, inefficiency, and mismanagement. We witnessed an ever-expanding bureaucracy and an ever-diminishing national security complex. We raised alarms about security threats and watched - horrified - as terrorists attacked us on our home soil; as hackers exploited vulnerabilities in our cyber networks; and as smugglers trafficked drugs, weapons, and unlawful immigrants across our porous borders. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) simply must find a better way to tackle these challenges.

Last fall, House Republicans proposed the "Better Way" agenda to do just that— provide a better way to secure our homeland, grow our economy, and make government more accountable to the people. Today's hearing will focus on a better way to manage DHS to prevent waste, fraud, abuse, and mismanagement, and to correct the outright negligence of the Obama Administration. I know firsthand that Americans are fed up with the status quo and are looking for ways to improve how the government does business.

As Chairman of this Subcommittee, I've seen that an unchecked and bloated bureaucracy results in failed programs and wasted taxpayer dollars. Simply put, DHS' bureaucracy should get operators what they need at the best cost to the taxpayer, and then get out of the way. Last Congress, I chaired hearings to examine instances where that was not the case; where dysfunction and mismanagement impeded the mission — instances such as:

DHS' botched management of the multi-billion dollar Human Resource Information Technology (HRIT) program;

DHS' total waste of taxpayer dollars on the Federal Protective Service's vehicle program, where it had more vehicles than officers to drive them; and

DHS' failed oversight of employee misconduct at the Transportation Security Administration and the U.S. Secret Service.

Every dollar wasted by inept bureaucrats is one less that can be spent on securing our homeland. Mismanagement puts our security at risk. The Heritage Foundation recently recommended that DHS reign in a bloated bureaucracy through a strong chain of command over component management functions so that DHS effectively equips, supports, and oversees its components. I am hopeful that the new Secretary, John Kelly, will use his military experience to do what the last Administration couldn't - provide frontline operators with the necessary tools for getting the job done and keeping our nation safe.

Agency watchdogs like those we'll hear from today bring invaluable insights to the issues facing the Department. Collectively, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) and the DHS Office of Inspector General (OIG) have made thousands of recommendations to improve DHS programs since the Department's inception. I look forward to hearing from GAO and OIG on ways that the Department can eliminate waste, fraud, abuse, and mismanagement.

In particular, I'd like to hear about steps DHS has taken to get off GAO's "High-Risk List" of areas in the federal government that are most susceptible to mismanagement. Yesterday, GAO reported that DHS' management functions remain ineffective, the federal government's cybersecurity activities need strengthening, and DHS' National Flood Insurance Program is unaffordable.

In addition to GAO's High-Risk List report, each year the OIG releases an annual report on major management challenges facing DHS. The 2016 report identified six broad areas where the Department faces serious management and performance challenges. OIG also identified hundreds of millions of dollars in questionable costs and funds. Hundreds of recommendations by these watchdogs remain open and unimplemented by DHS - this is unacceptable. I urge the Trump Administration to fully leverage the work of these watchdogs to drain the waste and inefficiency from DHS.

Washington bureaucrats may dismiss these management issues as simply the cost of doing business in government. Wrong. The American taxpayer deserves much better. After 8 years of failing to reign in Washington's bureaucracy, Americans demand more from their government. It's time to demand more from, and find a better way to manage the Department of Homeland Security.

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